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Scientists testing fish in Greenland's Berry Brook for potential Coakley Landfill contamination

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GREENLAND — Scientists are sampling fish at Berry Brook for potential contamination from Coakley Landfill this week, according to an official from the Environmental Protection Agency.

Melissa Taylor, who serves as the New Hampshire and Rhode Island Superfund Section Chief, said Thursday brown trout and other native warm water species are being checked at Lafayette Road, Lang Road, Sagamore Road and Brackett Road.

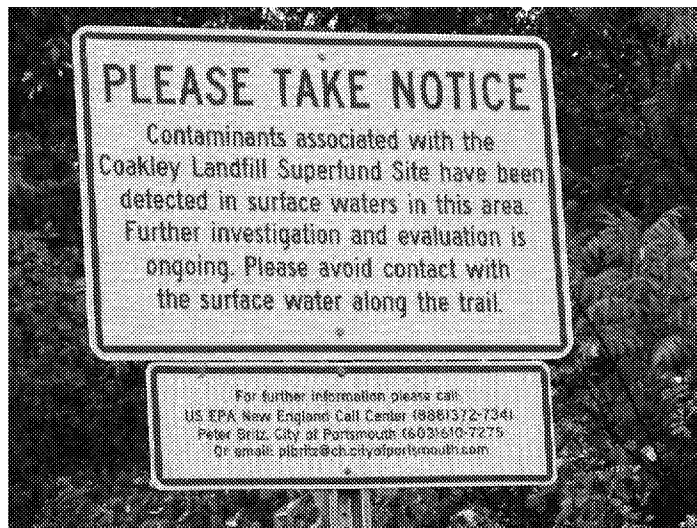
Per and polyfluoroalkyl substances have been found in surface water near Coakley Landfill and residents are concerned that it is contaminating the fish they consume. Earlier this year, New Hampshire Fish and Game officials issued a catch-and-release only emergency rule so further testing can be performed.

Fish and Game stocks the brook with 2,500 fish every spring and fall.

Taylor said some trout were caught Wednesday and the hope was to capture more for testing Thursday.

Taylor said scientists are not sure what potential effects PFAS have on the environment, but they want to be proactive.

“We want to make sure we’re protecting both human health and the ecological environment,” Taylor said. “Any time you have contaminants in the environment you need to assess it to see what the effects are.”



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Warning signs have been posted around Coakley Landfill telling people to avoid surface waters. Now, scientists are testing fish stocked by Fish and Game to make sure they are not being exposed to PFAS. (KIMBERLEY HAAS/Correspondent)

Taylor said once they see the results, EPA officials will be able to determine their next course of action.

On June 4, Region 1 EPA Administrator Alexandra Dunn was at the Coakley Landfill Superfund site. She said perfluorinated chemicals are a top priority for the agency.

On Wednesday, Dunn described the two-day regional summit on the topic of PFAS which starts June 25 at Exeter High School.

From 4:30 to 10 p.m. on June 25, regional and national senior officials will host a listening session.

"There will be open microphone opportunities and opportunities for members of the public to sign up and speak as they wish in 3-minute segments," Dunn said.

There will be a working session from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. the following day.

Dunn said input collected at the regional summit will be included in the EPA's national management plan.

Dunn said PFAS has been detected at locations in all six New England states.

Dunn suggested people interested in participating at the upcoming regional summit sign up online. For more information, visit <https://www.epa.gov/pfas/forms/pfas-community-engagement-exeter-nh>.